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Navy & Marine Corps Medical News
13 DEC 01
#01-48

Stories this week:

MN014801. Comfort Training Maintains Readiness
MN014802. Cowan Urges "Close Attention" to Disaster Training
MN014803. VCNO Asks Navy Leaders to Encourage Holiday Safety
MN014804. Navy Medicine Strives for Better Communication
MN014805. HSO Jax Gives Joy To Holiday "Angels"
MN014806. Japanese, U.S. Navy Dentists Bring Joy to Orphans
MN014807. Angels in the Operating Room
MN014808. Okinawa Nurses Sponsor JROTC Outreach Program
MN014809. This Month In Navy Medicine
MN014810. Healthwatch: Cut Fat and Increase Health In Holiday
Recipes

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MN014801. Comfort Training Maintains Readiness
By JO2 Ellen Maurer, National Naval Medical Center Bethesda
BALTIMORE - Nearly 250 staff members from the National Naval Medical Center Bethesda, Md., took part in training recently aboard USNS Comfort (AH 20) as the ship lay berthed in Baltimore.

The crew joined a small, reduced operating staff of about 55 Sailors permanently stationed on the ship. Together, the team practiced man overboard, fire and mass casualty drills, gearing up for a possible joint training exercise in the Baltic Sea next summer.

The exercise, MEDCUER/RESCUER 02, is tentatively planned for July 2002. Given the current political circumstances around the world, Comfort crewmembers realize that training during dock trials also ensures the ship's readiness to deploy and medically support military forces in wartime conditions.

Under Navy requirements, Comfort must be ready to deploy within five days. During the ship's most recent mission to New York City after the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centers, the crew activated in less than 24 hours.

Commander of the military treatment facility aboard Comfort, CAPT Charles Blankenship, MC, said the crew has proved they can be ready; now they need to stay ready.

"Keep your sea bags packed," Blankenship told the crew during an all-hands meeting on the first night of dock trials. "I don't know of any current plans to send the ship anywhere, but I do know that all medical platforms are in a state of readiness. This is the time to prepare because we don't really know what's in store for the future."

Blankenship added that the emphasis during these dock trials would be on personnel and patient safety. To keep the crew prepared for the uncertainty of real life aboard a ship, surprise drills in the middle of the night were a planned part of dock trial training, along with situational

scenarios that involved the entire crew reacting to events that could really happen during a longer deployment.

First time Comfort Sailor HN Reynaldo Gallegos said he appreciates the ship's overall focus on training.

"I think I've learned more about Navy Medicine in the last few days than I've learned since I joined," Gallegos said, adding that he hopes he'll be able to go with Comfort if the ship does deploy to the Baltic Sea in six months.

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MN014802. Cowan Urges "Close Attention" to Disaster Training

WASHINGTON, DC - Navy Surgeon General VADM Michael L. Cowan, MC, is urging commanders, commanding officers and executive officers of Navy Medicine's medical centers and hospitals to pay "close attention" to the National Disaster Medical System training kit being distributed to them by the Naval School of Health Sciences Bethesda, Md.

"Now, more than ever, contingency planning and cooperation among federal systems, like NDMS and the VA (Veterans Administration) and DoD contingency system, are becoming increasingly vital to homeland defense," said Cowan.

The kit contains a videotape and CD-ROM with an MS PowerPoint slide presentation. It was mailed to the centers and hospitals this week.

The videotape and CD-ROM is also available from NSHS Bethesda by request. Contact HMI Christian Davis, 301 295-2146, DSN 295-2146, e-mail cdavis@nsh10.med.navy.mil or CDR Elaine Ehresmann, MSC, 301 295-0203, DSN 295-0203, e-mail ehresmann@nsh10.med.navy.mil.

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MN014803. VCNO Asks Navy Leaders to Encourage Holiday Safety

The following "Personal For" naval message was sent to Commanders, Commanding Officers and Officers in Charge worldwide:

"During this year's holiday season, over 70,000 of our Sailors and Marines will be deployed with many engaged in combat operations. We all look forward to their safe return from challenging and dangerous missions. Thousands more of our people here at home will be traveling both far and near to see family and friends. We should be no less attentive to their safe return to duty. This time of the year is heavily traveled, and with lower fuel prices and lingering concerns over air travel, millions of Americans will be taking to the roads. Statistically, there is not more dangerous travel venue than our highways, and regrettably, fatalities are likely this holiday season with many more injured.

"I enlist your support to do everything you can to prevent our Sailors and Marines from being among these statistics. Take the lead with positive and innovative steps. The Naval Safety Center website, www.safetycenter.navy.mil, offers numerous easily implemented ideas. Let's make this a safe holiday season.

"Admiral William J. Fallon, VCNO."

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MN014804. Navy Medicine Strives for Better Communication

By Jan Davis, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery

BETHESDA, Md. - HMTL: Four letters that are enough to chill the blood of Navy Medicine webpage editor's worldwide. But now, thanks to an agreement between Naval Medical Information Management Center (NMIMC) in Bethesda, Md., and MedSeek, a company that specializes in website content management, many Navy Medicine webpage editors may soon be able to breathe a sigh of relief.

According to LT Michael Whitecar, MSC, deputy director of e-business services at NMIMC, MedSeek's new SiteMaker software will help those responsible for creating or editing Navy Medicine webpages do their job with ease. No HTML knowledge is needed, and other webpage software that uses HTML, such as FrontPage and Dreamweaver, may become a thing of the past.

"Using the SiteMaker software is an intuitive, fill in the form, process that makes even the most novice of webpage editors work like an expert," said Whitecar. "SiteMaker is allowing us to become the 'Yahoo!' of Navy Medicine."

The "beta" or test sites for MedSeek's technology will be NIMIC and Naval Medical Center San Diego. The Bureau of Medicine and Surgery in Washington, DC, is also testing the software on a limited basis - Navy and Marine Corps Medical News is uploaded to the BUMED and Navy Medicine websites using the new software. Over time, other Navy Medicine facilities may change over to the technology for its ease of use. NMIMC will become the centralized host for the new Navy Medicine webpage development using the technology.

Making our websites more capable and user-friendly is just part of a bigger goal Navy Surgeon General VADM Michael L. Cowan, MC toward making Navy Medicine an organization that communicates efficiently and effectively.

To this end, Cowan established a Communication Improvement Process Team, which meets weekly at the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery in Washington, DC. Heading up the IPT is RADM Noel Dysart, MC.

The IPT's most immediate goal is to improve the BUMED Intranet website, ensuring needed information is easily accessible. One of its first initiatives was to allow greater access to the BUMED website for non-Navy Medicine personnel. Before, only those within the med.navy.mil domain could access the website, unless they had a password issued to them. Now, anyone within the .mil domain can access the website.

Other communication improvements the IPT is implementing includes making streaming video available, better search mechanisms and a web design that is more intuitive for users. Other electronic communication methods, such as improved e-mail distribution, are also being examined.

Additionally, the IPT is studying "branding" BUMED - developing an integrated look for BUMED's electronic, print and other products.

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MN014805. HSO Jax Gives Joy To "Angels"

By JOC Bill Austin, Naval Healthcare Support Office Jacksonville

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. - Sailors and civilian personnel from Naval Healthcare Support Office (HSO) Jacksonville recently rallied together to show their compassion and caring to 60 young "angels" by donating filled gift bags to the Salvation Army Angel Tree Program.

Through Angel Tree, Navy Medicine personnel had the chance to become personally involved because they choose a specific individual, an "angel," to help. Salvation Army Angel Trees have brought holiday joy to thousands of needy children and elderly across the nation.

HSO has answered the community's call several times this year. For example, last October, the command collected and delivered 222 pounds of foods to downtown Jacksonville's Second Harvest Food Bank during national "Make A Difference Day."

"Volunteering is the best way to think of someone other than you," said HM1 Tanya Macadoo, who has coordinated HSO's participation in Angel Tree for the past two years. "The main reason I volunteer is that it just makes my heart feel good."

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MN014806. Japanese, U.S. Navy Dentists Bring Joy to Orphans

By Bill Doughty, U.S. Naval Hospital Yokosuka

YOKOSUKA, Japan - Under an American flag on a wall at the Kanagawa Dental College in Yokosuka, Japanese and U.S. Navy dentists came together to help charities - both in Yokosuka and in New York.

The Japanese dentists donated 100,000 yen (about \$800) to the Naval Dental Officers Association, to be used for the U.S. Naval Dental Center Far East (USNDCFE)-sponsored holiday party for the Shinsen Gakuen Orphanage. Any remaining money from the party was to go to help victims of the World Trade Center attack.

Accepting the donation on behalf of his association, CAPT Edward Amrhein, DC, USNDCFE commanding officer, expressed his appreciation, noting that the events of Sept. 11 have brought people closer together in a united goal.

"The war on terrorism has begun," he said. "And you, our friends, are contributing and participating in every way you can. We will win the war together."

"Best friends must share happiness as well as pain," replied Ryosuke Mizuno, a key member of the Dental Friendship Club.

Mizuno noted that Americans have a long tradition of supporting local orphanages such as Shinsen and Kobo Cottage.

"I want to inform people of the heartfelt volunteer events by U.S. Navy to all Japanese people," he said.

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N014807. Angels in the Operating Room

By JO1 Sonya Ansarov, Naval Medical Center San Diego

SAN DIEGO - Going through surgery can be an unsettling and uncertain event for most patients. The last thing a patient sees before the effects of anesthesia take over is a bright light and masked figures in blue moving about.

But don't worry, there are "angels" in the operating room watching over patients and they are disguised as perioperative (operating room, or OR) nurses.

OR nurses are responsible for providing before-and-after surgery care, but their main staple is care during surgery.

"We manage the operating room, making sure the doctors, anesthesiologist and surgical technicians have all of the instruments and equipment they need for the surgery. We keep traffic in the operating room at a minimum, and our top priority is taking care of the patient during the surgery," said LT Vincent Bourgeois, NC, an OR nurse at Naval Medical Center San Diego.

OR nurses talk with patients before the surgery to calm any fears they may have. During surgery, they assess vital signs and circulation, making sure pressure points are padded to prevent sores from occurring while the patient is lying in one position for a long time. After the surgery, the OR nurse continues care until the patient is ready to be transferred to the post anesthesia care unit (PACU) or the intensive care unit (ICU).

"I like the versatility in the day-to-day perioperative care because everyday is a different surgical procedure, and here at the medical center we do the most advanced procedures because we are a training hospital," said CDR Debbie McCain, NC, who is also an OR nurse. "It's exciting to be on the forefront of technology."

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MN014808. Okinawa Nurses Sponsor JROTC Outreach Program

OKINAWA, Japan - Navy nurses from U.S. Naval Hospital Okinawa reached out to local Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps, discussing and promoting

Navy Nurse Corps careers at two local DoD high schools.

"Students and faculty at Kubasaki and Kadena High Schools revealing a very high level of interest in the Navy Nurse Corps Commissioning Program," said LCDR Greg Nezat, NC, outreach project coordinator. "Many of these JROTC kids were not aware that the Nurse Corps offers outstanding options for getting officer commissions."

Nezat said the nurses volunteered to spend their days off at each high school, speaking to six to seven classes of JROTC cadets each day. In all, they spoke to 285 cadets. In addition to the speaking about the Navy Nurse Corps specifically, they also talked about other military career opportunities.

Because of the program's success, the Nurse Corps officers were invited to college night at Kadena High School.

"Helping even one student make the right academic and career choice makes this program a truly rewarding experience," said Nezat.

In addition to Nezat, volunteers included LT Ron Fancher, LTJG Laurie Basabe, CDR Al Runzel, LCDR Terry Anderson, LCDR Chis Gaye, LT Chris Oudekerk, and LT Abbie Marter, all of the Nurse Corps.

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MN014809. This Month In Navy Medicine

By Aveline V. Allen, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery

- Dec. 3, 1950: LT Peter E. Arioli, MC, is killed by sniper fire at Chosin Reservoir. He is the first Navy doctor to lose his life in the battle.

- Dec. 7, 1941: Medical healthcare professionals serve valiantly during and after the surprise on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. During the 24 hours after the attack, almost 960 were admitted to Naval Hospital Pearl Harbor and an unknown number were treated and released.

- Dec. 8, 1866: Surgeon's steward rating partially replaced by apothecary rating, with the caduceus becoming the apothecary's emblem.

- Dec. 10, 1941: Five Navy nurses became POWs when the Japanese attacked and captured Guam. They were held in Japan until August 1942 when they were returned to the United States as part of a prisoner exchange.

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MN014810. Healthwatch: Cut Fat and Increase Health In Holiday Recipes

By Aveline V. Allen, Bureau of Medicine & Surgery

The aromas of baked pies and cookies, roasted turkey and ham, buttered vegetables and creamy mashed potatoes with all the trimmings fills the air. Taking a break from the holiday rush, you sit back with a cup of creamy eggnog.

The sights and smells of the holidays are enough to make our mouths water, but to those who are watching their saturated fat and cholesterol as well as their weight, holiday feasts can be a dietary landmine.

But there are ways to cut the fat and cholesterol from your holiday foods without feeling as if you're doing Zen penance. Here are a few tips:

- If turkey's on your holiday menu, baste it with its own juices instead of butter or margarine.

"Butter or margarine adds an astounding 100 calories per tablespoon and butter is loaded with artery-clogging saturated fat," said LT Renee Pence, MSC, a registered dietician at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, Va. "Also, beware of self-basting turkeys, which often have butter injected under the skin."

- For a healthy turkey choice, eat a skinless piece of white breast meat, as opposed to the drumstick. White meat has 24 grams of protein per 3-ounce serving, and only half as much fat as dark meat.

- To cut the fat and calories in gravy and boost its nutritional value, use a fat separator with an opening at the bottom to pour out turkey drippings. Or, just spoon the fat off of the top of the gravy. Use healthful whole wheat or oat flour, instead of white flour or cornstarch to thicken the gravy.

- Traditional meal compliments of mashed potatoes, candied yams or sweet potatoes can also remain flavorful and healthy, without adding fat and calories. If you are cooking mashed potatoes, mix in chicken broth and skim milk instead of butter. While boiling the potatoes, add a cup of chopped onions to increase flavor and add vegetable power.

"There are also a variety of low-sodium seasoning blends available in the spice aisle of the commissary to give potatoes extra flavor without extra fat, calories or salt," said Pence.

Sweet potatoes and yams are naturally sweet, and taste only sweeter with baking. To enhance their natural sweetness and flavor, wrap them in foil and bake in the oven.

- There are healthful and tasty alternatives to white breads and rolls. One hundred percent whole wheat bread is a good alternative to white flour breads and rolls. Read the label to make sure the brand purchased is labeled "100 percent whole wheat". Pence emphasizes that not every whole grain bread uses whole-wheat flour as the main ingredient, so always check the food label to make sure it is first on the list.

- Side items such as canned cranberries that contain added sugar, can be replaced by serving whole cranberries, which are fat free and low in calories, and can be found in the produce section. Mixed with naturally sweet fruits, such as apples, they make a fresh sweet-tart condiment.

- Holiday desserts can be prepared by substituting certain ingredients, such as using egg whites for whole eggs, whole wheat flour instead of white flour, fructose, honey or fruit juice instead of refined sugars, applesauce instead of butter, margarine or shortening, and low fat, fructose-sweetened frozen yogurt in lieu of pie fillings. Pence notes that egg substitutes can replace whole eggs in recipes at a rate of a quarter cup for each whole egg.

"If honey or fruit juice is used in place of refined sugar, some adjustments to the liquid ingredients will be necessary to ensure proper consistency of the finished product," Pence said. "And it's important to make sure any applesauce used to replace fat is the natural, unsweetened variety. It can be used in equal quantities to the original amount of fat required."

Pence has one final tip for those who are preparing to sit down to dinner.

"Remember, find time for a post-meal walk to help burn any indulgences you may have consumed," she said.

For additional information on holiday cooking, visit Naval Environmental Health Center's website, www.nehc.med.navy.mil. In addition to nutritional information, the site has healthful, taste-tested recipes.

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